

RECENT LITERATURE

Townsend's 'Supplement to Birds of Essex County.'—In 1905 the Nuttall Ornithological Club published an admirable volume on the birds of Essex County, Mass., by Dr. Charles W. Townsend which has ever since been the standard work of reference on the coastwise bird-life of Massachusetts. Fifteen years have now elapsed and the Club presents a "supplement" by the same author,¹ which is rather more than half the size of the original.

Dr. Townsend has gathered together such a vast amount of additional information during this period of years that many changes have been found necessary in the dates of occurrence and status of the species and it was thought best to reprint the entire list with the statements of the character of occurrence of each species and under these such new matter in regard to habits and life history as had been secured. Sixteen species have been added and two dropped bringing the total to 335. The nomenclature has been revised to accord with the 1910 edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' although one form, the Labrador Chickadee, has been included which, as explained, has not yet been recognized by the A. O. U. committee. There is a bibliography covering the years 1905–1915 and a good index.

The volume is a fitting companion to the earlier list with which it conforms in size, typography and style. The two together form not only the up-to-date list of the birds of Essex County which the author aimed to present, but a repository of first-hand observation on the habits of most of the species mentioned, which must be consulted by anyone who may be compiling an exhaustive bird biography or reading up the life history of a species for his own edification.

For the general reader however we think the introductory chapter on "Changes in the Bird Life of Essex County since 1905," will possess a peculiar interest, so well does it summarize the changes that we have all noticed, even though we but partially appreciated them, in our own neighborhoods. There has been the astonishing increase in the interest in birds and in the preservation of birds and game; the devastation of bird haunts and the driving away of certain species in the zeal of some other supposedly worthy activity—the war on the Gypsy moth in the case of Essex County, but in other places the war on the mosquito or the chestnut blight, etc.—the advent of the Italian pot-hunter; the use of the automobile by hunters in covering large areas of country in a single day; and the use of the field-glass in bird-study—indispensable in the

¹ Supplement to Birds of Essex County, Massachusetts. By Charles Wendell Townsend, M.D. With one Plate and Map. Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. No. 7. Cambridge, Mass. Published by the Club. August [sic] 1920. pp. 1–196 [reviewed from unbound sheets].

hands of the trained observer, but disastrous in those of the "enthusiastic amateur." All these and other factors are mentioned and their influence upon bird life and bird study discussed. A half-tone plate of the Ipswich River in Wenham Swamp forms the frontispiece to the volume and the map of the county which appeared in the original list is here reproduced for handy reference.

In the whole plan of the work and its execution the author has been peculiarly happy and both he and the Nuttall Club deserve the congratulations of ornithologists upon the appearance of the volume.—W. S.

Bannerman's 'Birds of the Canary Islands.'¹—In 'The Ibis' for 1919 and 1920 Mr. David A. Bannerman has been publishing in instalments a comprehensive paper on the birds of the Canaries. The seven parts have now been issued as a separate comprising 300 pages which easily takes its place as the authoritative work on the subject.

It is based primarily upon the author's field work in the islands, he having spent a portion of every year from 1908 to 1913 in the archipelago but other material has been examined and all of the literature bearing upon the Canary Islands carefully studied. The list includes transient species as well as residents and is prepared on a definite plan consistently carried out, which materially aids anyone who may make use of it. The nomenclature is carefully worked out with a reference to the original description of each species, and the type locality. Then follow a concise statement of the nature of its occurrence in the Canary Islands; a full discussion of specimens and relationship, with pertinent quotations from various works on the birds of the Islands and from the author's personal records, all of which go to make up a very full account of the habits and distribution of each species, and finally the range is given, which in the case of resident species is divided into two paragraphs, one giving the range in the islands, and the other the range beyond the archipelago, if the species is not endemic.

In the introductory pages there is a bibliography and an itinerary of those visitors who have done the most important ornithological work on the islands. There is likewise a statement by the author of his methods, including an apology for rejecting the "nomina conservanda" of the B. O. U. 'List.' In our opinion however he is to be heartily congratulated upon his stand in this matter. Uniformity and stability in nomenclature can only be obtained by strict adherence to the rules of the International Code no matter where they lead us.

The summary and conclusions which constitute the last part of Mr. Bannerman's paper give the author's views on many of the general prob-

¹ List of the Birds of the Canary Islands with Detailed Reference to the Migratory Species and the Accidental Visitors. Parts I to VII. By David A. Bannerman. From 'The Ibis', 1919, pp. 84-131; 291-321; 457-495; 708-764; 1920, 97-132; 323-360; 519-569.